

WASHINGTON  
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SOC 4.01.1 The Trib

# New Daily for New York — The Trib; 200,000 Due Jan. 9

NEW YORK — "When was the last time you heard someone in the news business lay it on the line about his rivals?" asked Leonard Saffir, in addressing a standing room crowd at the Overseas Press Club.

Saffir, a veteran of Hearst's International News Service and more recently administrative assistant to former Sen. James Buckley (Cons. — N.Y.), is editor-in-chief and publisher of what promises to be New York City's fourth daily newspaper (five, if you count the Wall Street Journal, although this is a national newspaper.)

Early in the morning of Monday January 9, 1978, 200,000 copies of The Trib will be delivered to kiosks, as well as to The Trib's own vending machines, in an area running from Trenton, N.J. to New Haven. The Trib, as a Monday through Friday tabloid, appears to be the first conservative — but not reactionary — newspaper since the absorption of Hearst's Journal-American into the ill-fated World-Journal-Tribune, more than a decade ago.

In his address to the Overseas Press Club on September 15th, Publisher Saffir gave valuable notice that The Trib will not hesitate to mix up with the Big Apple's media establishment — which he proceeded to roast with apparent relish:

\* "The Times suffers from terminal dullness; The Daily News suffers from delusions of grandeur; and The (New York) Post just suffers."

\* "The Times has become almost a parody of itself...It's so complicated that they should give away a roadmap and a compass...And what about the 'New York Times' obsession with food? I hear Punch Sulzberger is going to start a new series called 'The One Hundred Most Needy Recipes.'"

\* "The Times is successful, fat, stuffy and doesn't know what to do with itself...It seems to exist as a kind of living museum...It doesn't speak to or for the average professional, or factory worker, or businessman or woman, or taxpayer in New York. It speaks down to them in a mean, scolding tone, like a schoolmaster in a Dickens novel."

\* "Did you read the Times' editorials on the looting and rioting during the blackout? When I finished reading about how guilty all non-looting rioters should feel, I wanted to go to the local police station and turn myself in. Against all of the evidence that has accumulated during the past 15 years, The Times is still putting out the same high-minded wrong-headed sociology that brought this great city to its knees. I wonder what Punch Sulzberger would say if rioters and looters entered The Times building and vandalized the place, breaking everything they couldn't carry away?" (ED. NOTE: Ask Katherine Graham).

\* "The Times is arrogant in its smugness. It is insulated from reality. It is contemptuous of the values of the people on the streetcorner, the people who run the businesses and work in the factories and patrol the beats and put out the fires all over this city. The Times is living off its legend. Its time has come — and gone. It is a zombie newspaper wandering around without discernible purpose and without spirit."

\* "To The Daily News, evidence of seriousness means hiring those two aging wonder boys of the nineteen sixties, the inventors of the chip-on-shoulder school of journalism, Breslin and Hamill. These two openly despise and ridicule the moderate conservative values and life styles of the average New Yorker. Hamill tells us that the best thing is for government to nationalize the oil and gas industry. Breslin lectures us about the necessity to be kind to rampaging looters and social criminals. This economic illiteracy and social irresponsibility is what 'The New News' has sunk to."

\* "There is not really much to say about The Post — not in mixed company. Let me just say that (Rupert) Murdoch has performed a miracle. He has taken The New York Post and with millions of dollars and immense effort actually made it into a more deplorable newspaper than it was before — something we all thought was impossible. Murdoch's coverage of the Son of Sam murders will

continued

conservatism and liberalism. We are not an ideological puff sheet, but a newspaper that respects ideas...We believe our format will appeal to advertisers, because their ads will not be buried in the kind of peak-a-boo-I-see-you confusion that marks The Times."

\* "Do we have any biases? You bet! We are prejudiced in favor of this city and its people. We favor a strong, free economic system that benefits workers, businessmen and women, and investors...We don't belong to that school of journalism that puts America last. We are not jingoists — but we ARE convinced that with all its faults, this nation is the great hope of mankind. Our nation must be FREE in order to be helpful to the poor and elderly and the needy. If this be an acute case of flag-waving, so be it. That's where The Trib stands."

During an interview in his office — part of one acre of office space on the fourth floor of 711 Third Ave. in the heart of Manhattan — Saffir was asked by Panax Newspapers why he feels so confident that The Trib can succeed where so many newspapers have either died or failed to go to press.

"We know enough about the newspaper business," he replied, "to realize that you no longer have to invest in the purchase of presses as well as a building to house them right below or behind the rest of the offices and the newsroom. All our printing will be done under contract in New Jersey. All our copy goes on terminals and into the computers with a press run from midnight to 3:00 a.m..."

"We have also contracted out all of our distribution. And just as with the printers, we have backups in case of stoppage for any cause. We'll pay our own staffers comparable salaries and benefit scales. But we have no direct contracts with any unions."

What about advertising?

"We have contacted every ad agency in New York and without exception there has been a great deal of enthusiasm and support. The people of New York want another paper, philosophically. They have been pushed around and subjected to high rates."

Originally there were reports that The Trib might come out around Thanksgiving time. Now it's

January 9th. Doesn't this suggest a similarity to the proposed New York Press of John Shaheen, who spent several million dollars over a number of years, but now has now abandoned plans to publish?

"Shaheen was an oil man, who didn't know the newspaper business. He bought buildings and presses and chartered the Queen Elizabeth for a press junket. We are newspapermen and we realized that Thanksgiving is really too late to get the holiday advertising. But you can be sure we will be on the streets on January 9th."

Saffir pointed out two more economies: leasing a floor instead of buying a building — and the extensive use of syndicated columns. "Murdoch of The Post for some reason dropped George Will. The Washington Post Writers Group salesman was in our office the same day, and now we have Will. The Times won't even buy syndicated material. And speaking of that newspaper, we have just hired their business editor and a former advertising director."

How about the wire service?

"We will have UPI and Reuters. AP charges on the basis of the city, rather than the circulation. So we haven't taken AP."

How has The New York Times reacted to The Trib?

"There has been a blackout on Trib news in New York City. The Times, the newspaper of record, suppresses stories about The Trib. At least three major stories, written and filed by respected Times staffers, have been killed by management. The Times metro editor, Sydney Schanberg, was quoted in The Wall Street Journal (which has been fair) as saying: 'It is our usual practice to write about new publications when they happen. This one hasn't happened.'"

Saffir laughed heartily at this explanation and retorted:

"While Shaheen was struggling unsuccessfully to get out The New York Press, The Times wrote a number of lengthy pieces — because Shaheen was planning an afternoon paper."

— L.K.



Top: Trib Publisher Saffir • Bottom: Editors John Denson and Les Kinsolving